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Record Badgerline profits

The preliminary results for Badgerline Group PLC, to the year ending 31 December 1994, indicate record pre-tax profits of £16.7m on a turnover of £223.48m. This turnover figure includes £84.029m from acquisitions principally the PMT and Rider groups, which in the first full year since flotation, has almost doubled Badgerline's size. Both of these additions were earnings enhancing and contributed to the adjusted basic earnings per share of 9.9p, an increase of 12.5% over 1993.

Trevor Smallwood, Badgerline's chairman, announced that the improvement in earnings had led to the recommendation of 3.0p as the final dividend, making a total of 4.5p for the year. This will be payable on 22 May 1995 to shareholders on the register by 24 April.

Following adjustments for the write down of property in Bath in 1993, the group's operating margin increased from 9.4% to just over 10% and further improvement is expected this year. Despite a strong vehicle replacement programme which includes 453 units for 1995 and with orders already placed for 477 new buses in 1996, the group will continue to explore profit opportunities for enhancement through organic growth, acquisition and margin improvements through reduced operating

1995 **UK Coach** Rally

With only a fortnight to go to the UK Coach Rally at Brighton, the level of entries is steadily growing and the organisers are confident that last year's total of 50 will be exceeded. Among the previous winners who have already confirmed that they will be competing in 1995 are Travellers, Capital, Tellings Golden Miller, and the cur-rent Coach of the Year title holders - Beavis Coaches.

The trade displays promise plenty new to see, with several models sched-

News

UAS predatory say OFT

The Office of Fair Trading has found that United Automobile Services was behaving anticompetitively when running its bus services in Darlington. A report published by the OFT on 28 March is the result of a Competition Act investigation into complaints lodged by South Durham Bus Company, which trades as Your Bus. The company alleged that UAS operated loss-making services on routes which Your Bus began to run in competition with UAS.

Despite the conclusions reached by the OFT director general, Sir Bryan Carsberg, there will be no repercus-sions for UAS. He claimed the completion of the report had been held up by Your Bus and Darlington Transport Company through delays in providing information. He commented, 'I am satisfied that United's action in adding 13 extra buses to its network of services in Darlington was intended to remove Your Bus from the routes and was therefore predatory. But, its ability to increase fares or reduce frequencies is constrained by the great changes in the bus market in Darlington since my investigation began. That fact, coupled with my reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission of bus services in the north east of England on 25 November 1994, has led to my decision to take no further action."

uled to make their UK debuts. Operators looking to the future will have a rare opportunity to see examples of 15 and 13.5 metre coaches, which have yet to be legally accepted for operation in the UK.

If you fancy your chances against some of the most experienced coach drivers in the country, why not make your own bid for the Coach Driver of the Year title. You can be assured of a good time, even if you don't make the final run-off. There is still time to enter: Contact Ann or Paul Cousins of Coach Displays Ltd, 49 Maple Road, Hayes, Middlesex, UB4 9LR. Tel: 0181 842 0056, Fax: 0181 842 0070.

GRT acquisitions cleared

GRT Bus Group's acquisition of SMT Omnibuses, Lowland Omnibuses (Reiver), and the assets of Edinburgh Transport, have not been judged to be against the public interest and will not be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. A period of consultation between GRT and the Office of Fair Trading is now concluded.

GRT's executive chair-man, Moir Lockhead, commented, 'We are pleased but not surprised by this decision. We have always been confident that these acquisitions will be in the interest of the public. We are investing substantial funds into providing a better quality of service to the customer, at the same time as re-vitalising two other weakened businesses, therefore enhancing their competitive status. We believe that competition is healthy and encourages higher standards within the industry - standards that we as a group actively pursue.'

CPT welcomes London planning guidance

Veronica Palmer MBE, director general of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, has welcomed a statement by MP John Gummer announcing new guidance for London planning authorities urging them to promote the use of public transport. The CPT's own research into the economic viability of town and city centres shows a great dependence on public transport and on local bus services in particular.

Mrs Palmer said, 'There is an increasing awareness of the role that transport provision has to play in economic development and regeneration. We are pleased that the Government has shown that it recognises the importance of local transport operators and local authorities working together towards the creation of a more effective public transport system.'





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News

RDC calls for action

"Many people living in rural England lack a wide range of key services,' claims the Rural Development Commission. Its findings were based on a survey of rural services which was published on 30 March. While it admits that the availability of most services has not worsened since the last survey in 1991, many parishes had lost shops, post offices, mobile libraries, police stations, places of worship or resident ministers.

The report showed: 41% of parishes have no permanent shop; 43% have no post office, 52% have no school; 29% have no village hall or community centre; 71% have no daily bus service; 92% have no day care facilities for the elderly; over 90% have no bank or building society; and 83% have no permanent doctor based in the parish. Commenting on the results, RDC chairman Lord Shuttleworth said, 'Access to certain key services and facilities is vital in maintaining villages as places where people can both live and work. How to stem the loss of services and improve the mobility of disadvantaged groups must be a key issue for the Rural White Paper to be published by the Government later this year.'

Autobus appointment

Autobus Classique has appointed John Senior as sales executive to assist sales director Alan White. John will operate from the company's base at Hellaby, near Rotherham, and will work alongside the existing dealerships held by Carriageways and Connaught PSV. He is 26 years old, married and has High Street and direct selling experience.



Lone leaves - Zoe rejoins

After six happy years at Bus & Coach Buyer, Advertisement Controller and Danish Invader, Lone Kirkwood has moved to pastures new. Husband Paul's employers have relocated to Gosport and a tearful Lone has left us to begin a new career in the south. One of the original members of the team that started B&CB over six years ago, Lone's enthusiasm, energy, determination and leadership qualities have been important factors in the establishment of the magazine. We'll all miss her.

She'll be a very hard act to follow, and the person taking on the new role of Classified Supervisor is Zoe Fox, a name that may be familiar to many of our advertisers as Zoe has previously worked for the company. We are sure you will join with us in wishing both Lone and Zoe every success in their new positions.

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Quality built for life

News

CPT cautious

over proposals

for VED

continuity

The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK has given a cautious welcome to proposals by the Department of Transport to introduce continuous vehicle licensing.

Following strong repre-sentations by CPT to the DTp, PSVs are not included in the initial proposals. CPT director general, Veronica Palmer said, 'CPT fully understands and agrees with the aim of continuous VED to reduce or eliminate the number of untaxed private vehicles on the road. We could not however accept that PSV operators should lose the opportunity to de-licence a vehicle for a short period - to cover major accident repairs, rebodying or where there is seasonal demand."

New GBCO chair

Paul Tappin has been elected chairman of the Guild of British Coach Operators. He replaces Steve Telling who has stepped down after two years in office. Tom McLachlan has retired after being secretary to the Guild for ten years and Peter Rogers has been appointed administrator, with immediate effect.

Kirkby changes

Kirkby Coach & Bus has strengthened its sales team with the appointment of Mick McElhone as sales manager and the the promotion of Shaun Millar from sales administrator to northern England sales executive. Mick McElhone (41) joined Kirkby in 1978 and was responsible for north east England and Scotland. Shaun Millar (25) started as a sales trainee in 1988 and has spent time in each of the company's head office based sales support areas.

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PARTS & SERVICE



News

Badgerline to merge with GRT Bus Group

The terms of a merger between Badgerline Group PLC and GRT Bus Group PLC have been agreed by their respective boards and have been recommended to shareholders. The merger will create Firstbus PLC which will be the second largest bus group in the UK with some 5,600 vehicles and a proforma combined market capitalisation of around £265m.

Both Badgerline and GRT will become subsidiaries under the Firstbus holding company, itself comprising a board of directors from both enterprises. Trevor Smallwood will become executive chairman and Moir Lockhead becomes deputy chairman and chief executive. They are supported by: Robbie Duncan, group commercial direc-tor; Tony Osbaldiston, group finance director; Keith Ahlers, regional director for the north of England; Colin Smith, regional director for Scotland; Graeme Varley, regional director for the south of England and Wales; and John Woolley, group engi-neering director. Non executive positions on the board are taken by Bob Barclay, Bill Foreman, Martin Gilbert and Andy Higginson.

The management of the enlarged group draws heavily on the experience and skills developed within Badgerline and GRT. The business will be controlled regionally to allow the new team to focus on develop-



One of Badgerline's Plaxton Verde bodied Dennis Lances.

Firstbus becomes the UK's second largest operator

ment of schemes, but much of the administration will be centralised and slimmed down to reduce costs. The increase in size also brings further economies of scale when making purchases and will allow cheaper borrowing to finance acquisitions or new projects.

As there is no significant overlap of operational activity between the group members, very little rationalisation can



GRT has been evaluating Mercedes Benz 0405s.

CTA to set National Standard for volunteers

A national standard for driver training and assessment is to be established by the Community Transport Association. The CTA has called for the voluntary sector to get its act together and set agreed standards for volunteer minibus drivers to ensure the safety of passengers. The move is a follow on from last year's publication of the Code of Good Practice, which the CTA directed at the operation of minibuses in the voluntary sector. Wide consultations are now taking place to ensure unanimity on the content and structure of the national standard. It should be prepared by October 1995.

Southampton & District COA election of officers

Southampton & District Coach Operators Association held its annual general meeting in March. It was reported that £672 had been raised at the 1994 dinner dance which was held at the Novotel, Southampton. The money was donated to local charities.

At the AGM the following

officers were elected: chairman, Ray Dunn - Ray Dunn Coach Travel; vice chairman Jim Sinclair - South Coast Travel; secretary, Sally Dunn - RDCT; CPT representative, Mac McClean; treasurer, Margaret Jacobs - Jacobs Coaches; and social secretary, Kerry Pitter - Colliseum Coaches.

be expected. While both have employed different methods of monitoring cost and efficiency, the systems are considered complementary and it is believed a combined application will produce improvements in operating margins.

Operating divisions will be split into three areas. Scotland will be operated by Grampian Transport, Lowland, Kirkpatrick, Mairs, Midland Bluebird and SMT. The north of England area will include PMT and Yorkshire Rider's operations. The south of England and Wales division includes Brewers, Badgerline, Citybus, Eastern Counties, Eastern National, Eastern Leicester CityBus, Midland Red West, Northauters Red West, South Wales Transport, South Wales Transport, Thamesway, Wes-sex and Western National.

The merger has prompted GRT to announce a second interim dividend to shareholders of 3.0p in lieu of a final dividend in relation to the year ending 31 March, making a total of 4.4p in this financial year.

The share issue of Firstbus is based on one Badgerline share for one Firstbus share and 1.9023 Firstbus shares for each GRT share. This reflects the market capitalisation of each group at the time of the merger and values Badgerline at £168m and GRT at £97m. The share price on 3 April was 133p for Badgerline and 253p for GRT.

Manufacturer Focus

Optare strengthens product support

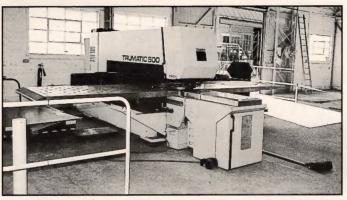
UniTec to launch dealer network

Optare has already celebrated its tenth anniversary in business with the launch of the Mercedes Benz 0405 based Prisma and has promised to unveil another significant new model at Coach & Bus '95. The order books are looking good with only limited availability remaining for 1995, and exports are booming. Things have gone well since the company regained its independence following the collapse of United Bus and many of the plans made at that time are now coming to fruition.

With the growing Optare vehicle parc, the oldest of which are now ten years old, and the additional responsibility taken on for the Bova luxury coach range, the company is now responsible for supporting a sizeable number of buses and coaches. UniTec, Optare's after sales



Peter Hale, Aftersales Director.



New CNC cutting machinery recently installed at Crossgates.

support division has been broadening the scope of its services to operators and, having doubled its turnover in the past year, will shortly announce the launch of a UniTec service dealer network.

To begin with there will be 26 dealers although this is expected to grow rapidly to the 30 mark. All are also Leyland DAF dealers with whom UniTec already has strong links through DAF Aid, the scheme which supports DAF chassis and DAF powered integrals including the Bova range. Agreements have been signed with Leyland DAF Aid and International Truck Service (ITS) and all UniTec dealers are linked through the computer systems run by these operations.

Already UniTec dealers have taken on stocks of parts sufficient to enable them to deal with the majority of roadside breakdowns on Bova Futura models. In addition they have the ability and authorisation to carry out work on all Optare products.

To ensure that operators receive the standard of assistance they would want when they call, an extensive programme of staff training has commenced in conjunction with Bova. Experts from Holland are instructing staff from the dealerships in the intricacies of all Bova-specific items such as the air conditioning systems, electrics and heating systems.

Aftersales director, Peter Hale, commented, 'We are keen to grow the business and would like to develop to the point at which we are the operators first stop for all of their parts requirements.' To this end UniTec will endeavour to supply parts for most vehicles not just for those built by Optare and Bova. 'If we see a niche not being served we will go for it. We have a Multipart account and can supply all Multipart items,' said Peter, adding, We only sell genuine parts from OE manufacturers, but our pricing is realistic, based on a higher turnover.

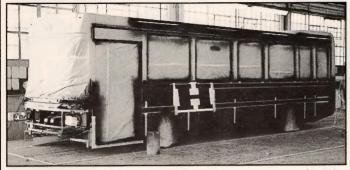
Helping Peter to promote UniTec's services and look after customer needs are Jamie Harper and Roger Kay of the former United Bus Service (UBS) operation, who have been joined by the experienced Martin Sangster in the role of General Parts Manager.

Peter sees a great deal of opportunity for UniTec dealers in the future. 'We are encouraging dealers to look ahead, develop relationships with local operators and put themselves in a position to take advantage of the reduction in engineering capacity within the bus and coach industry. We are providing them with the information they need to enable them to be successful in the bus industry,' he said. 'We are trying to get over the total product and customer support message.'



UniTec dealers have already taken on the parts needed to handle most Futura breakdowns.

Manufacturer Focus



Two Vectas in build for Hutchisons of Overtown will take to five the number of such vehicles in the fleet.

'Our approach is that we form a team with the operator to support the bus and coach passenger, because if passengers stop using buses, operators stop buying buses,' said Peter.

Another UniTec development has seen a business centre created within the Crossgates plant through which accident repair and refurbishment of Optare vehicles can be undertaken. 'We offer a very quick turn-round time on any damaged Optare vehicle, and the operator has the peace of mind that the work undertaken has been completed properly by the people who originally built the product,' said Peter.

Investment

Elsewhere at the plant there is clear evidence that the company is continuing to invest in its future and ensure that the quality levels for which the company is known maintained and are improved. New CNC cutting and bending machines ensure the accurate manufacture of parts and reduce the amount of waste to an absolute minimum.

A reorganisation of the plant is currently underway which will see a two production line system introduced, one handling saloons and the other Metrorider minibuses. Outstanding orders for double deck Spectras have recently been completed and though there are other orders in the pipeline, none are scheduled to be built in the immediate future.

Orders

That the order books are

Deliveries of the new Optare Prisma on the Mercedes Benz 0405 underframe have commenced. This is an early example for the Tees & District operation of North East Bus.



The DiPTAC 1997 Metrorider with a 250mm first step and all steps 300mm deep.

healthy is clear from the amount of vehicles for a variety of operators that are under construction at Crossgates. The Metrorider continues to sell well with examples in build for Cambus and Viscount, R&I, and for the Caldaire fleets of West Riding, Selby & District and South Yorkshire. Blackburn Transport, an early customer for the MCW Metrorider, is



A new version of the Metrorider has been developed which Optare are confident will entirely meet the 1997 DiPTAC requirements.

about to take delivery of its first Optare built Metroriders in the form of six 8.4 metre, wide bodied examples of which two have standard doors and four the wider doored fast-flow arrangement. Cardiff have now placed all of their latest batch of 27 in service, Nottingham has taken a further two. Go Ahead Group has placed an order for 54 while the British Bus subsidiaries of Northumbria and London & Country are to take 13 and 14 respectively. Having recently taken its first ten, Preston is to take a further 12.

A prototype Metrorider which meets the 1997 DiPTAC requirements has been built and will be demonstrated to interested parties. It features a 250mm first step and 200mm second and third steps, with each step being 300mm deep and equipped with flush nosings. Step-well and pavement lighting has been improved, stanchions are fitted to every seat and the spacings have been increased to enable passengers to walk in to each seat. The changes have reduced the seating capacity from 31 to 27 which with a standee capacity of 13 gives a maximum capacity of 40 passengers.

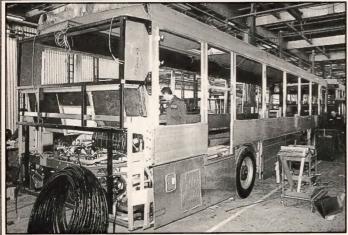
Metrorider exports are booming as a result of the deal with DRB of Malaysia for 1200 CKD kits over a five year period. In 1994 121 such kits were supplied and 175 orders for 1995 have so far



One of Wilts & Dorset's DAF DB250 Optare Spectras nears completion.



Manufacturer Focus



A Mercedes Benz 0405 mounted Prisma taking shape on one of the production lines.

been confirmed. Managing Director, Russell Richardson revealed that the company was looking at a number of other similar opportunities and was happy to sell a complete left hand drive bus, or a drawing or a jig.

With the launch of the Prisma full sized saloons can now be offered on Mercedes Benz 0405, Dennis Lance (Sigma) and DAF SB220 (Delta), while the MAN 11.190 mounted Vecta bridges the gap between the 12 metre designs and the Metrorider. Four Vectas for Black Prince of Morley and a pair for Hutchisons of Overtown are in the course of delivery, while a trio of Deltas have been supplied to Reading Transport with a further five for Go Ahead Group just going in to build.



A Metrorider built by DRB in service in Malaysia.

Any vacant spaces in the programme have been filled with stock build and to date these have all been sold before reaching the production line.

With 60 Bovas imported and sold in 1994 and a similar number scheduled for this year, the company is very pleased with its continuing relationship with Bova.

The one gap in the Optare's current product line up appears to be a low floor vehicle, a point I put to Rus-



A Black Prince Vecta.

sell Richardson. He confirmed that his team was busy working on low floor projects, and though he declined to give any more details he promised that something would be announced quite soon.

SALES

Bob Vale Coach Sales TEL: 01494 716996

Kingshill House, Spurlands End Road, Great Kingshill, High Wycombe, Bucks HP15 6PE Tel: 01494 716996 Fax: 01494 716331

By Stuart Jones.

VOLVOS

1989 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE, 52 reclining seats, courier seat, radio/PA, new Test and repainted white£77,500 1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, painted white £87,500 1988 VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P50, 51 reclining seats, courier, 1988 E VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, new retrimmed, 57 fixed seats, pannier lockers, repainted white, low mileage, POD, radio/PA£59,500 1987 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre demountable sunken toilet, boiler, radio/PA/TV, white, clean.....£57,500 1985 Sept C VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 53 reclining retrimmed seats, plus courier, double glazing, Webasto, curtains, provision for centre toilet/continental door, repainted white, exceptional£55,000 1980 VOLVO B58 DUPLE DOMINANT II, Express, POD, 53 seater, clean, all white, recent engine fitted by Volvo dealer £12,000

OTHERS

1990 G MERCEDES 609D, recently new conversion, 24 seater with 3 point seat belts, radio/PA, white, low mileage, immaculate.£24,500 1990 SCANIA K113 PLAXTON 4000, 67 seater, 2 crew, washroom and toilet, double fridge, boiler Webasto, Telma, 4 monitors.£POA

1990 H REG MAN 10.180 JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE P35, 37 reclining seats, courier seat, POD, radio/PA..... £69,500 1988 E DENNIS JAVELIN PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 53 seats, radio/PA, POD £45,000 1988 LEYLAND TIGER CUMMINS L10 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500. 49 reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, curtains, d/glazed, manual with Telma, mint £52,500 1987 VW OPTARE CITYPACER, automatic trans, 25 seats, very clean, December. Test. Choice of two £6.250 1987 VAN HOOL ASTROMEGA, 73 reclining seats + 2 courier seats, servery, toilet, washroom, fridge, bunk, 360 MAN intercool turbo engine recon 6,000 miles ago, manual g/box, Voith retarder.£72,500 1986 D MERCEDES 609D, recently new conversion to 24 seats with radio £14,500 1986 PP NEOPLAN PLAXTON 4000 DOUBLE DECKER, 71 reclining seats, crew seat, servery , toilet, fridge, d/glazed, Gardner 1985 FORD R1015S PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 35 reclining seats, Webasto, POD, radio/PA..... £25,000 1983 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLE CARIBBEAN, 49 reclining seats, semi auto, rear toilet, hydracyclic gearbox, PA.......£17,500 1980 BEDFORD YMQS DUPLE DOMINANT II, 35 seater, POD, radio/PA£8,500 1980 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLE DOMINANT II, 12 metre recon new engine, 53 retrimmed seats, semi auto, very tidy £8,500

COACHES URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR CASH

Operator Focus

PULHAM'S

Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire

Pulham's Coaches must be able to lay claim to being one of the longest established operators in the country, let alone in their native Gloucestershire. It was back in 1880 that the business started, initially as a carrier for the Cotswold farms for whom a regular run to Cheltenham, primarily for the carriage of eggs, was inaugurated.

Operations began in the village of Naunton- more recently the home of the architect of bus deregulation, the late Lord Ridley - and continued to be located there until 1937. Unlike many long established operators the motor bus did not make its debut straight after the Great War, and it was not until 1927 that Pulham s first, two Williams bodied Chevrolet 14 seaters, were purchased new. Previously, passengers had been carried into Cheltenham accompanied by the eggs and other farm produce but up until this point they had been a secondary consideration.



The last vehicle purchased new, and currently the youngest vehicle in the fleet is this Paramount 3200 bodied Volvo B10M.

The new buses were put to work on a Naunton to Cheltenham service, for which a licence was subsequently granted under the 1930 Road Traffic Act, and also on contract work for Westwood's Grammar School in Northleach. This school was served continuously for over sixty years until its closure in the Summer of 1988.

During the 1930s the business developed despite competition on the road out of Cheltenham with services provided by Young's of Stowon-the-Wold and Miles Coaches of Guilting Power. A balanced policy of purchas-ing new and secondhand vehicles saw seating capacities increase to cater for heavier loadings and whilst Bedfords were favoured, three second hand Dennis Lancets also joined the fleet. Much of this increased demand arose from the

development of a large RAF airbase at Little Rissington and licences were obtained to run services between there, Bourton-on-the-Water and Cheltenham. Because of the shortage of space at Sunnyside Garage in Naunton, and since the centre of operation had shifted eastwards, the current site in Station Road, Bourton-on-the-Water was acquired in 1937. Its condition then, comprising old farm outbuildings, is a far cry from today's modern garage, yard and offices.

The heavy wartime loadings, especially from the RAF base, allowed Pulhams to be



Roger Pulham (left) discusses the company's Caetano Optimo with his cousin, David Pulham.



In common with most operators in rural areas, the Bedford OB figured prominently in the 1950s with no less than 10 being owned - five simultaneously.



A butterfly fronted Duple Vega on a Bedford SB8 chassis at Bourton-on-the-Water in 1967.

Operator Focus



Note the special dome fitted to this Bedford SB5 Duple Super Vega bought new in 1962 for service work.



Pulham's first brand new heavyweight coach was this 1948 Burlingham bodied Leyland PS1.



This Duple bodied Daimler CVD6 joined the fleet in 1964 and lasted over eight years.



Saturday hires to Associated Motorways were a major source of income in 1972 when Cheltenham was an important hub on the express coach network. Pulham's Duple bodied Bedford SB was seen leaving the famous coach station.



The only low height double decker operated was this AEC which came from Chesterfield in 1950.

allocated two Bedford OWBs by the Ministry of Supply and many of the early postwar acquisitions were also 29 seat Bedford OBs.The diesel engine was represented too with a new Leyland and a Daimler. At this time the first double decker entered the fleet in the shape of a former Birmingham bus.

The 1950s were difficult for rural operators and although services were maintained. Youngs ceased trading and sold their services to Kearsey's of Cheltenham. They in turn passed some local rural routes to Pulham's in 1959. After the high intake of new vehicles in the period after the Second World War, the company then went through an eight year spell with only one new delivery, although fleet modernisation continued using the secondhand market with the fleet size stabilising at nine vehicles, whilst the increased activities precipitated the purchase of an unusual new Burlingham bodied Bedford SB1

Maybe the happenings of the next few years set the groundings on which today's operations are based. In 1961 Kearsey s wished to sell the former Young s route from Cheltenham to Moreton-in-the-Marsh via Stow-on-the-Wold in spite of knowing that the rail line from Cheltenham to Kingham was due to close. Pulham's bought the service and on the closure of the line, in 1962, integrated the ex-Kearsey route with their own operations to provide the basis of today's main service. In the early years, the level of loadings required a double decker but with the relaxation of vehicle dimension regulations a Bedford VAL and then a Ford R226 met requirements. In this period a significant intake of Bedford coaches, both new and nearly new, entered service. In the midst



Pulham's first new Paramount Tiger was this smart 1983 example.



The only double decker operated in recent times has been this ex-London DMS type Daimler Fleetline.

of this activity the current partners, cousins Roger and David Pulham, had become involved in the business -Roger having taken charge of vehicle maintenance and overhauls. The high standards set then have continued to this day.

Further expansion took place in 1968 with the purchase of the Miles family business from Guiting Power which gave additional stage carriage work and a contract to Bourton Vale School. However, as the RAF camp at Little Rissington was in decline, the company was delighted when, in the mid 1970s, Spook Erection rejuvenated the Charter Market at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, such that Tuesday is now by far Pulham's busiest day of the week. Currently no less than seven special market services are operated under contract to the present market managers, Grenchurch, in addition to diversions on the main trunk service from Cheltenham to serve additional villages.

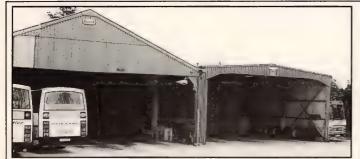
Fleet modernisation continued and Bedford YRQs were purchased when they became available with power steering and air brakes with the first Leyland Leopard arriving in 1971. The Bedfords have all gone, one being exported to Malta. Subsequent Leopards bought new through the 1970s were to a better specification having power steering and 0.680 engines, some surviving today and still, like the rest of the fleet, looking exceptionally tidy. These coaches were bought with the assistance of new bus grant and found their way on to all forms of work including stage carriage, continental work, and Associated Motorways (and its successors) duplication as well as private hire. When the express coach interchange at Cheltenham closed, the reqular Saturday duplication of up to seven vehicles ceased.

The acquisition of the business of Flucks Coaches of Stow-on-the-Wold in 1983 brought Pulham's fleet to its maximum size with a vehicle authorisation of 25. It also expanded the network with market day services from Stow-on-the-Wold to Banbury



Cherished plates of Gloucestershire origin are now favoured for the fleet.

Operator Focus



The depot buildings.



One of the last of the short Bedfords built was this YMPS with 35 seat Plaxton body. It was bought new in 1987.

and from Burford to Moretonin-the-Marsh with Saturday links from Kingham to Cheltenham and from Stow to Evesham. Other market day routes have developed subsequently including a commercial service from Stow to Witney and Carterton and an additional Thursday route to Banbury, starting from Milton-under-Wychwood.

The mixed fleet of vehicles acquired with the Fluck's business were mostly sold as quickly as possible, whilst some short Bedfords and Leyland Tigers with Plaxton bodies were bought new, supplemented by three second hand Leyland Tigers from Reading whose stay was relatively short. The late 1980s were quite traumatic for Pulham's; having just become used to deregulation, the Gloucestershire Education Department reorganised the secondary schools in the area by closing Westwood's Grammar School in Northleach, and sending children instead to either the Cotswold School in Bourton-on-the-Water or Chipping Camden School. Although some new contract work was picked up for the new schools, the loss of the Northleach work caused a fleet reduction to the present size of 19 vehicles.

Selling some of the surplus vehicles assisted in the purchase of the company's first Volvo B10Ms, acquired new in the Autumn of 1988 and early 1989. Since then a 37 seat Volvo has been acquired secondhand whilst in 1991 two more new Volvo B10Ms were purchased. The latter pair remain the most recent full sized coaches to have been bought new, although a Toyota Optimo minicoach has been acquired. However, two further low mileage Volvos and Leopard another have entered service, allowing the earlier Leopards to be sold. After these changes the fleet composition is six Leyland four Leyland Leopards. Tigers, Seven Volvos, the Optimo and a Ford Transit.

The company is very progressive in its methods of operation and has well equipped workshops which incorporate a PCV Testing Station. Both partners are engineers competent although a fitter is employed. There are two administrative staff and nine full time drivers, supplemented by part timers, on the books. Looking to the future, David's son Andrew is now involved in the business. Having completed an apprenticeship at Leyland Bus, he not only helps in the garage but is also a trained continental coach driver. All but two of the fleet are garaged under at Bourton-on-thecover



The three piece screen and twin leaf doors of a Paramount 3200 Express bodied Leyland Tiger at the Bourton terminal of the main Cheltenham service.

Water with the balance being out-stationed at Lower Oddington and Guiting Power respectively to save dead mileage on contract work. Although Gloucestershire County Council provide some publicity, Pulham's supplement this by producing an excellent timetable book, using the twelve hour clock. which is available through suitable outlets in the area at a price of 40 pence, thereby doing everything possible to promote the service network.

High standards are fundamental to the company's operating philosophy and as members of CPT, the partners support the actions the trade body is taking on behalf of the industry. Roger Pulham believes that for operators with local bus services it is essential to restore some



One of Pulham's first pair of Leyland Leopards.



Once with National Travel South West, this Plaxton Supreme Leopard was photographed on Spook Erection contract work.

form of new bus grant since the returns on his type of operation on vehicles costing £150,000 are just not there. However, for long routes such as the Moreton-in-the-Marsh to Cheltenham service which has a through running time of at least an hour, depending on the route taken, coach comfort is vital if the service is to compete with the private car. Roger also deplores the pegging back of fuel duty rebate which is an additional cost that can only be clawed back from the passenger. One of David Pulham's concerns is the way in which rates for private hires have stuck over the last year or two. The trouble is, he says, you alter your prices to reflect the increased costs and then lose the job even if the quality of vehicle and service offered by your competitor does not come up to your standards.

I first came across Pulham's Coaches in the 1950s and was impressed with their operation then, and in the mid 1990s I am still impressed. A very diverse operation is undertaken, with local bus, private hire, tours and excursions both at home and abroad and a friendly staff to provide these activities. The company has been wise not to put all its eggs in one basket - a lesson learnt in the very early days when the egg collection run to Cheltenham diversified to carry other farm produce and, of course, a few passenaers.

By Thomas W. W. Knowles F.C.I.T., F.Inst.T.A.





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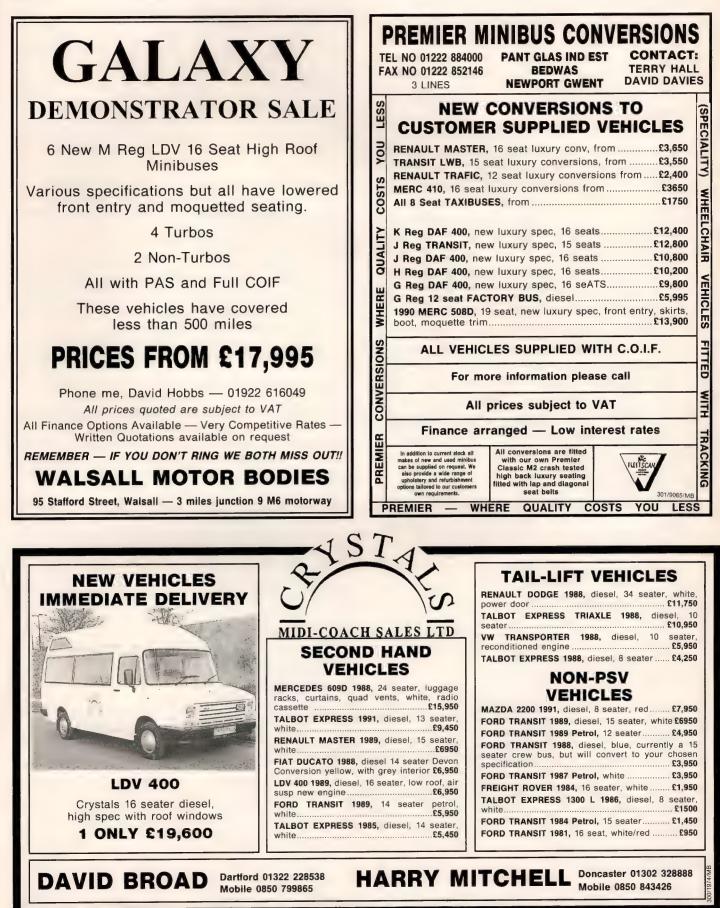
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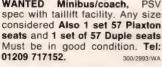




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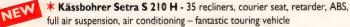
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NEW MERCEDES 609D, 24 seats, full spec boot, power door, luggage racks, radio cassette

NEW MERCEDES 709, Manual, 29 + coac Seats, p.door. STOCK NEW MERCEDES 410, 16 high back, face forward seats + Wheelchair. Stock.

Torward seats + Wheelchair, Stock. NEW TRANST 15, high rod, coach spec. Early. NEW TRANST, 15 dissel PSY. NEW TRANST, 15 seat dissel, Auto, PSV. Early. NEW TRANST. 15 seat dissel, 4: Stock Stock. NEW TRANST dissel, 8: seat taxibus/wheelchair NEW LEYLAND DAF, 72 Pdoor, Tailint. NEW LEYLAND DAF, 72 Pdoor, Tailint. NEW LEYLAND DAF, 17 PSV, low roof. NEW DAF 400, diesel, 16 PSV, coach spec, Turbo, 2 weeks

MAZDA Diesel, 14 PSV. White. Stock

NEW DAF, 20 +standee's service bus

WHEELCHAIR PSV IN STOCK

NEW MERC 410, 15 075 W/chairs, Tailift NEW MERC 410, 165 W/chairs, Tailift NEW MERC 609, 24/5 W/chairs, Tailift. 2 weeks. NEW DAF, 16/20, 6 W/chairs, P. door TRANSIT, 8 seat taxibus, 1 W/chair

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REASONABLE OFFERS 95 LEYLAND DAF, 16 school spec, belts 94 TRANSIT, 16 coach high roof PSV 94 M LEYLAND DAF, 16 Low Root, P. Steering 93 MERCEDES 711, 24 seats, power door 93 MAZDA, 14, PSV diesel, delivery mileage

only. 92 TRANSIT, LWB diesel, PSV, 12 92 LEVLAND DAF, 12, 12,000 m only 91 J MERCEDES 709, service 29 + 8 standee's 90 MERCFDES 11, 33 coach spec 90 MERCF09, 25 coach, P. door 90 TRANSIT, 16 side door, Deansgate. 90 MERCF0ES 404D, 16 ail FF seating. 90 TRANSIT, 15 diesel PSV auto Deansgate

89 CHARISMA 0303, 49 exec

89 MERC 609, coach spec, 23 89 MAZDA, 14 seat, PSV, tested, 89 MERCEDES 609, 19 + Boot, p.door 89 MERCEDES 208D, 12 seats, 89 FREIGHT ROVER, 16, high roof, PSV. 89 FREIGHT ROVER, 16, essl.

88 VOLVO B10 Duple 320, 57 seats 88 TALBOT, Triaxle, 13 + 2 wheekchairs, PSV

188 IALBOT, Traxie, 13 + 2 Wreekchairs, PSY 188 INEER 650 pp. door, 21 seals 489 REPAULT DODGE, 25 service bus, auto. 88 TRANSIT, 12, PSY. SWB, Diesel 489 INERC 650, 23 coach, boot, tested. 88 FMERC 650, 23 coach, boot, cash spec. 88 INERC 614, 29 seals coach spec. 88 INERC 614, 29 seals coach spec. 88 INERC 6155, 32 p/door boot 67/88 RENAULT DODGE, 25 service 87 MERCEDES 608, 18 power door 87 MERCEDES 609, 21 sender occur 87 MERCEDES, 22 p/door 87 MERCEDES, 23 p/door

86 LEYLAND CUB, 33 + standees service

86 SETRA DOUBLE DECK, new test 86 IVECO SERVICE, 19 + standees 86 RENAULT DODGE REEBUR, 25 service

85 SETRA, exec. 49, toilet, TV

84 DAF BERKHOF. 49 toilet TV

84 DAF JONCKHEERE, 49, toilet, exe 84 VOLVO IRIZAR, 49 toilet. TV exec

83 VOLVO JONC, 57 seat, Twin deck 83 DODGE R BURGESS, diesel, auto, 17

or. BEDFORD, 35 seat, Plaxton DENNIS, V8 auto Alexander Service Bus. BEDFORD, Plaxton 29, P. door LEOPARD DUPLE EXPRESS, 53 BEDFORD, 53 Duple, Testing,

LEOPARD DUPLE EXPRESS, 53 BEDFORD, 53 Duple. Testing. FORD, 35 seat Duple II, tested LEVLAND PLAXTON EXPRESS, 49 FORD, 35 6 speed Duple II testing FORD, 31 turb 6 speed VOLVO DUPLE II, 48 rec, toilet. Tested. SEDDON, Gardner manual box. LEVLAND Duple, express doors. LEVLAND DXPRESS Duple, 53 VOLVO PLAXTON, 53 8 speed, new test.

MERC, diesel 4 berth motor home, delivery

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VOLVO VAN HOOL BOVA ΤΟΥΟΤΑ ΟΡΤΙΜΟ

1992 BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49/53 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, fridge, water boiler. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior -- white/yellow/beige. MoT December 1995

1990 DENNIS JAVELIN 12MTR PLAXTON 3200, 53 reclining seats, - autumn tint; Exterior

1989 MAN JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, driver's bunk, video and monitor, water boiler, double glazed side windows, Telma retarder. Interior grey/red; Exterior -silver. MoT January 1996.

1989 TOYOTA OPTIMO, 21 seats, power operated entrance door. Interior -red; Exterior - white. MoT March 1996

1988 TOYOTA OPTIMO, 19 seats, TV and video, water boiler. Interior — red; Exterior — white. MoT December 1995

1988 DENNIS JAVELIN 12MTR PLAXTON 3200, 53 reclining seats, power operated door. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior - white. MoT August 1995

1988 DAF DKFL CAETANO ALGARVE, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, water boiler. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior - white. MoT September 1995

1988 BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49/53 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door. Interior — red/grey; Exterior —

1987 LEYLAND TIGER 260 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 53 reclining seats, power door. Interior - red; Exterior - white/blue. MoT February 1995

1987 DAF DKFL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 53 reclining seats, power operated door, TELMA retarder. Interior - grey/maroon; Exterior --- white/red.

1987 FREIGHT ROVER, 20 seat service bus, power operated door. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior - yellow/green. MoT June 1955

1986 DAF SB 2300 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 53 reclining seats, courier seat. Interior - red; Exterior - red/white. MoT August 1995

1986 (D) DAF SB PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 55 seats, power door, curtains. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior - white/maroon. MoT November 1995

1986 VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 43 seats, power operated door. Interior - autumn tint; Exterior orange/white. MoT December 1995

1985 BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49 reclining seats, continental door, water boiler, wired for video and monitor. Interior - grey; Exterior cream/brown. MoT December 1995

1982 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLE DOMINANT IV, 53 seats, 6 speed ZF gearbox, power door. Interior white/yellow. MoT December 1995 autumn tint: Exterior STOCKISTS OF VAN HOOL PARTS

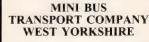
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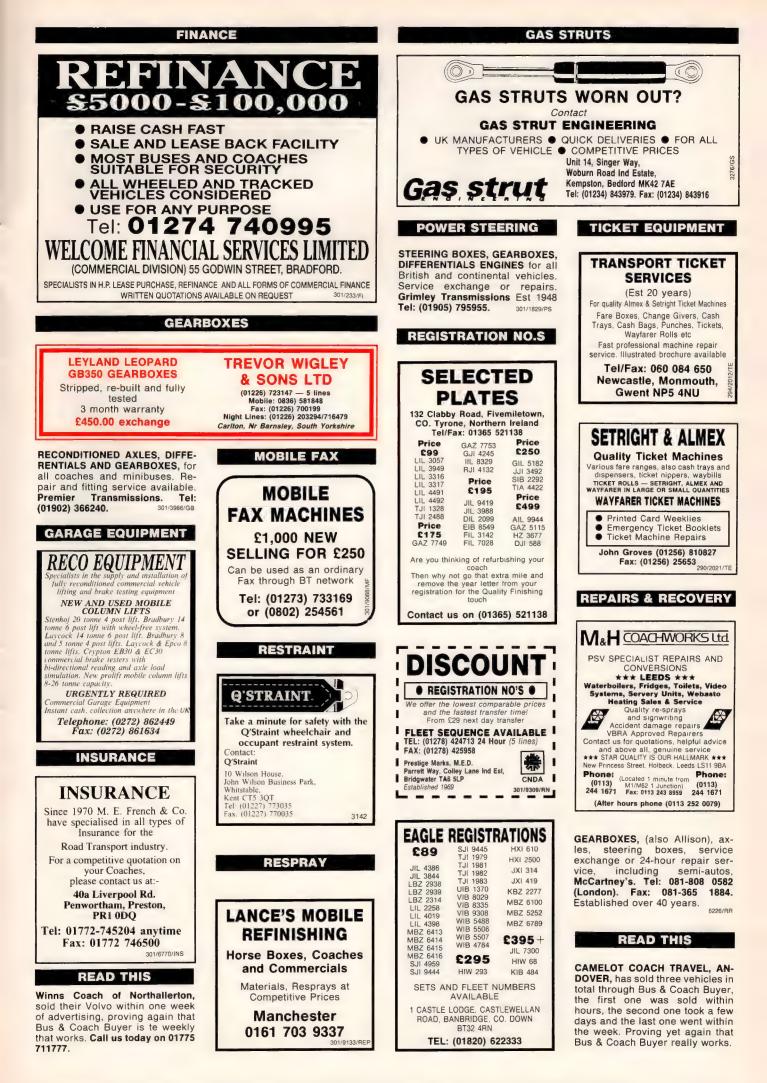
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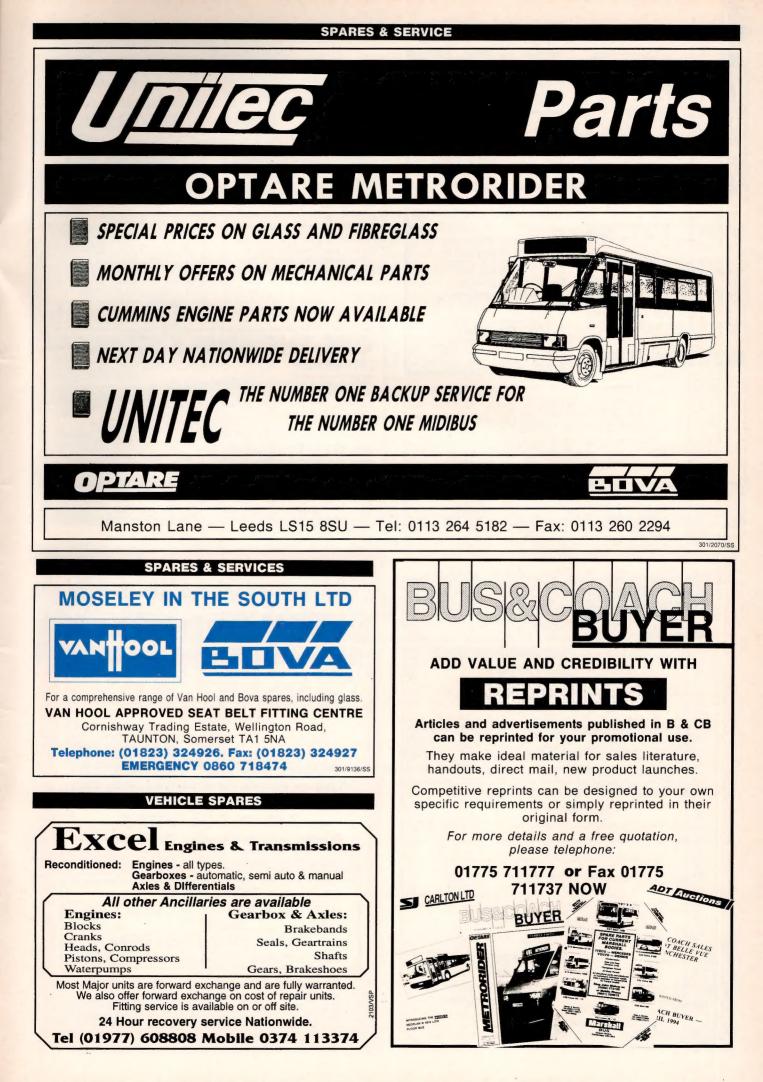


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Established for over 40 years	The winder obsides have to be	
ALLA TALE IN THE REAL AND A		Irkby
KIRKBY	1992 LEYLAND TIGER PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 49 reclining seats, ZF fully automatic gearbox, double glazing, rear sunken toilet, rear continental door	J826 GWS
COACH & BUS	1992 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON EXCALIBUR 50 reclining seats, Telma, rear continental door, curtains	J734 CW1
	1989 DAF SB2305 DUPLE 320 57 seats	UIJ 648
For Sales	1989 DAF MB230 PLAXTON 3500 49 reclining seats, rear continental door, rear demountable toilet, courier seat	F191 GAW
For Quality	1989 LEYLAND TIGER PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 49 reclining seats, rear saloon toilet	F770 GNA
FOIDERVICE	1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 Centre continental door, centre sunken toiler, double glazing	F21 CWW
	1988 DAF MB230 CAETANO ALGARVE 49 reclining seats, centre demountable toilet, centre continental door	E168 ENH
	1988 DAF MB230 VAN HOOL ALIZEE 51 reclining seats, centre continental door, centre sunken toilet	MIW 2425
	1988 (F) LEYLAND TIGER PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 53 reclining seats, curtains	F79 VWK
	1988 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, N/s centre door, air conditioning.	E581 UHS
	CHOICE OF TWO 1986 DAF MB200 CAETANO ALGARVE	C170 WKS
	50 reclining seats, rear continental door, rear sunken toilet 1985 VOLVO B10M BERKHOF ESPRITE	DSV 710
Bower C & D & S Capacities are available Mercedes 7110 & 814D	49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, centre continental door 1982 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLE GOLDLINER	UDW 901Y
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The Optimo III would be an asset to any company.

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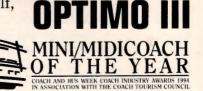
OPTIMO III

Carrying 18 or 21 passengers, it is extremely manoeuvrable and practical, and provides all the prestige and comfort of a big coach for approximately a third of the cost.

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